

In the Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A planter for growing a transplantable plant having a root system and a stem which extends from the root system, the planter comprising:

a container having an interior, a bottom and a hole defined within the bottom; and

a retainer member which is [attachable to] positionable about the stem of the plant desired to be transplanted within the planter and which cooperates with the container for supporting the plant through the hole defined within the container bottom so that the root system is exposed to the interior of the container and so that the plant stem extends downwardly from the bottom of the container;

the retainer member being in the form of a foam body having an outer periphery and which is positionable within the interior of the container so that when positioned about the stem of the plant and positioned within the interior of the container, the retainer member is prevented from falling out of the hole defined within the container bottom, and wherein the foam body has slit therein which extends from about the center of the foam body to the outer periphery thereof for accepting the stem of the plant desired to be transplanted by spreading the foam body apart at the slit and inserting the plant stem sideways into the slit; and

the container includes means associated with the container bottom for surrounding the outer periphery of the foam

body so that upon inserting the stem of the plant desired to be transplanted into the slit of the foam body so that the foam body is positioned about the stem of the plant and then positioning the foam body, with the plant stem accepted thereby, into the interior of the container adjacent the bottom thereof while the slit is held in a closed condition about the plant stem, the outer periphery of the foam body is confined within a prescribed area and thereby prevented from expanding outwardly by the associated means so that the slit is prevented from spreading apart from its closed condition about the plant stem.

Claims 2-4. (Canceled)

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) The planter as defined in Claim 1 [4] wherein the associated means defines a radially inwardly-directed flange which substantially encircles the hole defined within the container bottom, and the foam body [retainer member] is prevented from falling out of the container bottom through the hole thereof by the radially inwardly-directed flange.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) The planter as defined in Claim 1 further including [includes] divider means for separating the interior of the container into an upper compartment and a lower compartment so that materials used for plant growth can be separated from one another within the container interior.

Claim 7. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 6 wherein the divider means includes a body which is porous in nature for permitting the passage of water and fertilizer from the upper compartment of the container and into the lower compartment thereof.

Claim 8. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 7 wherein the divider means includes a body of foam material which is sized to span the interior of the container when positioned therein.

Claim 9. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 7 wherein the divider means includes a multiple of bodies of porous material for dividing the interior of container into a lower compartment and a multiple of upper compartments.

Claim 10. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 1 wherein the container includes a bag having flexible sidewalls which permit the bag to be collapsed for shipping, packaging and storage.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) A planter for growing a transplantable plant having a root system and a stem which extends from the root system, the planter comprising:

a container having an interior for containing dirt or potting soil within which the plant can be grown, a bottom and a hole defined within the bottom; and

a retainer member which is positionable about the stem of

the plant desired to be transplanted within the planter and which cooperates with the container for supporting the plant through the hole defined within the container bottom so that the root system is exposed to dirt or potting soil contained within the interior of the container and so that the plant stem extends downwardly from the bottom of the container;

the retainer member being in the form of a foam body having an outer periphery and which is positionable within the interior of the container so that when positioned about the stem of the plant and positioned within the interior of the container, the retainer member is prevented from falling out of the hole defined within the container bottom, and wherein the foam body has slit therein which extends from about the center of the foam body to the outer periphery thereof for accepting the stem of the plant desired to be transplanted by spreading the foam body apart at the slit and inserting the plant stem sideways into the slit; and

the container includes means associated with the container bottom for surrounding the outer periphery of the foam body so that upon inserting the stem of the plant desired to be transplanted into the slit of the foam body so that the foam body is positioned about the stem of the plant and then positioning the foam body, with the plant stem accepted thereby, into the interior of the container adjacent the bottom thereof, the outer periphery of the foam body is confined within a prescribed area and thereby prevented from expanding outwardly by the associated means so that the slit is thereby prevented from spreading apart from its closed

condition about the plant step.

Claims 12-14. (Cancelled)

Claim 15. (Currently Amended) The planter as defined in Claim 11 [14] wherein the associated means defines a radially inwardly-directed flange which substantially encircles the hole defined within the container bottom, and the foam body [retainer member] is prevented from falling out of the container bottom through the hole thereof by the radially inwardly-directed flange.

Claim 16. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 15 further comprising divider means for separating the interior of the container into an upper compartment and a lower compartment so that materials used for plant growth can be separated from one another.

Claim 17. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 16 wherein the divider means includes a body which is porous in nature for permitting the passage of water and fertilizer from the upper compartment of the container and into the lower compartment thereof.

Claim 18. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 17 wherein the divider means includes a body of foam material which is sized to span the interior of the container when positioned therein.

Claim 19. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 17 wherein the divider means includes a multiple of bodies of porous material for dividing the interior of container into a lower compartment and a multiple of upper compartments.

Claim 20. (Original) The planter as defined in Claim 11 further including means for supporting the remainder of the planter from an elevated support structure.

Claim 21. (New) The planter as defined in Claim 1 wherein the outer periphery of the foam body is cylindrical in shape, and the associated means includes a circular recess section having sidewalls for nestingly accepting the foam body when the foam body is positioned within the interior of the container so that when the foam body is positioned about the stem of the plant desired to be transplanted and then the foam body, with the plant stem accepted thereby, is positioned within the circular recess section, the foam body spans the entire width of the circular recess section so that the outer periphery of the foam body is prevented from expanding outwardly by the sidewalls of the circular recess section.

Claim 22. (New) The planter as defined in Claim 11 wherein the outer periphery of the foam body is cylindrical in shape, and the associated means includes a circular recess section having sidewalls for nestingly accepting the foam body when the foam body is positioned within the interior of the container so that when the

foam body is positioned about the stem of the plant desired to be transplanted and then the foam body, with the plant stem accepted thereby, is positioned within the circular recess section, the foam body spans the entire width of the circular recess section so that the outer periphery of the foam body is prevented from expanding outwardly by the sidewalls of the circular recess section.